Glossary

Aerated soil
An aerated soil isa soil with a good movement of air through the soil structure. The opposite is a wet waterlogged soil.

Aggregates
Soil aggregates are soil ‘lumps’ of a range of sizes.

Anaerobic soils
Anaerobic soils have very little oxygen present -for instance the wet, waterlogged, marshy soils in a bog. While anaerobic conditions are important for some processes, such as bacterial reduction of nitrate to nitrogen, these conditions can also produce hydrogen sulphide, methane and other undesirable substances.

Bearing capacity
This is effectively the weight a soil can withstand before severe damage occurs to the structure of the soil. Bearing capacity varies throughout the year, for instance a very heavy tractor that causesno damage on dry soils may cause a lot of damage to the soil structureof wetted soils.

Buffering capacity
Buffering capacity is the ability of the soil to reduce high alkalinity or acidity levels coming perhaps from pollution (e.g. acid rain). Chalky or limestone soils for instance are very alkaline and can neutralise acids more effectively than acid,peat soils.